# Some Views On The Present State Of Things.

Hacsi Horvath

Point Foundation needs to get busy working on solutions to a variety of imbalances. What follows is a survey of some of our most pressing concerns and some ways these might be addressed.

•Building. We need to pay much less rent. A place in the city is tempting but other problems could arise with a move there, e.g. postal mixups, general sense of complexification and congestion in urban place. Possible long term solution: purchasing a piece of land and modular buildings appropriate to our needs. The purchase might be made without down payment: rather high monthly payments ($3-4000?) would soon amount to plenty, and the place could be paid off relatively soon.

•Books. We need to get one or more major book projects going immediately. We've got a crack team that's rarin' to go. Presently have agreement in principle with Shambhala for a small/easy project (advance something on the order of $20K). Let's make more books. Let's get some book deals underway.

•Distribution of WER. We need, at least, to renegotiate the contract with Eastern. Many places that used to carry WER don't/can't/won't now. WER seems to be selling all right where it <u>is</u> found (judging from Eastern's reports) but smaller and "alternative" shops frequented by our constituency ought to be able to carry WER: presently no incentive to do so, the small discount being prohibitive. It's outrageous that WER can scarcely be found in Marin. May some small distributors carry WER, if they've been good to us.

•Fulfillment. We need to dump Fulco ASAP. Notwithstanding reports of others' success, our relationship with Fulco has been a Fiasco. It seems hopelessly screwed up and one learns almost daily of some horrific new twist. Best solution: full time customer-service person at Whole Earth to deal with customers and accurately relay data to <u>local</u> (not New Jersey) fulfillment house. Advantages: we're still <u>personal</u> but don't have to overwhelm ourselves with technical recordkeeping etc. Keeping fulfillment nearby means we have necessary physical oversight of the process. Fulco is making our customers hate us.

•Printing. A brief look through recent printing bills for the magazine shows a dramatic (100%) cost increase in the past 2 years, with a similar print run. A marked jump between issues 82 and 83. New paper the culprit? Byrd and new paper overall? New paper is nice, but must it be this nice? Printing costs have doubled, and we're talking about 240K/yr. vs. 120K. We need to research a decent, cheaper paper.

• Working Assets. We need to know immediately the status of the Working Assets deal. Does it need to be saved. Can we offer several prominent ad placements in WER instead of the promised but impossible MWEC inside cover? Let's move on this.

• WER. We're doing it. Issue #84 is well underway. MWEC's appearance in November will give WER lots of momentum (remember the bind-in card). Onward! WER need not be re-geared to new audience. If anything, continue to emphasize environmentalist/ecotech angles, having been the first magazine to do so anyway. Huge magazines specialize in knitting, certain dog-breeds, Civil War re-enactors. It's not content that's the problem. More people need to see us. It's not necessary or even advisable to become Gigantic: just sustainably vigorous. We needn't become something other than ourselves.

• Grants. Let's get some grants. Seems like the Buck Fund would pay for what amounts to a free computer school for Marin kids. Funding could pay for coordinator & equipment & space: the object not to make $$$ on the grant but to have the project celebrated and widely written up to gather goodwill ($$$) for and interest in Point. Buck Fund might also support Whole Earth Library as a community resource: make it available within certain hours to College Students and visiting scholars. Many books could even be checked out. This is a wonderful library. Grant could pay for curator, maintenance, and rent. Plenty of other granting purposes could be dreamed up along these lines.

• Creative marketing. Harper evidently allows certain magazines to place subscription postcards within the pages of Harper books. We should look into this. Working Assets Long Distance telephone service bills come with Mother Jones postcards. We should look into this.

• Postal Bills. Let's avoid huge mailings-out of publicity and advertising materials. Let's be very selective about whom we Target.

These are just a few observations on present conditions. I feel it important to build on the momentum that the Catalog will give us. Growth for Point will be best if we keep to a sustainable model. Let's not shoot beyond our sights or we'll miss the mark. Anything we do, let's think it through as best we can, so as not to bog down on a whim's repercussions. First things first, onward and steady. Supreme success will follow.